

Board of Pardons and Parole/Department of Corrections
January 18, 2008
Meeting Summary

Attendees: Mike Ferriter, Craig Thomas, Vance Curtis, Teresa McCann O'Connor, Julie Thomas, Jeff Walter, Mike Mahoney, Gary Hamel, Pam Bunke, Diana Koch, Pat Smith, Bob Anez, Mike Raczkowski, Colleen White, Kerry Pribnow, Rick Deady, Cathy Gordon, Colleen Ambrose, and Myrna Omholt-Mason. Montana Women's Prison Deputy Wardens Mike Aldrich, Bob Paul, and Sue Orand participated via VideoConference.

The attendees were welcomed by Director Ferriter and Mr. Thomas and the group introduced themselves.

Old Business: Craig Thomas gave a review of agenda items that were discussed at the December 1, 2006 meeting. Items meriting further attention were:

- Psychological reports: a discussion ensued regarding the relative costs and benefits of administering nationally recognized psychological testing instruments (computer generated) to offenders prior to their appearance before the Board. Warden Mahoney offered to develop a cost-estimate and determine what the standard is in other jurisdictions.
- P&P officers attending BOPP hearings and meetings: attendance by officers is sporadic.
- On a separate matter, Jeff Walters asked Probation and Parole to educate their officers, when writing a report of parole revocation notice in the case of an offender facing a new criminal charge, to include (when appropriate) conditions violations as the Board is seeing only the criminal charge noted. This is problematic when the criminal charge is dismissed.
- GED services: Pat Smith recognized that Cascade County Regional is not providing GED services at this time and indicated that if GED is a Board imposed condition, DOC will rotate an offender to a facility that offers GED.
- Geriatric placements/medical parole: the medical parole statute was legislatively amended. Discussion is ongoing to utilize the Great Falls prerelease center for a 40 bed geriatric expansion.
- DPHHS commits and parole eligibility: revocation and placement issues have not been worked out. Guilty but mentally ill offenders are still under DPHHS' supervision.
- Letter from Kent Wilcox-Interim Audit communication: The current policy meets the needs of the department and the Board. Diana Koch will have the legal department determine whether the Board's authority needs to be clarified in a MOU or addressed through the existing DOC Conditional Release policy 1.50.6.

New Business:

GPS/prerelease project & sex offender program: Pam Bunke reported that prerelease occupancy numbers are down but will change when offenders completing treatment programs are released from the two methamphetamine facilities. The placement of sex offenders in prerelease centers continues to be problematic based on screening committee's reluctance to accept offenders, community perception and potential liability. Great Falls prerelease is investigating the possibility of accepting ten sex offenders as a pilot project. GPS monitoring of will be utilized and center will be paid an additional \$11.00 per day per diem. A RFP for a secure 120 bed sex offender treatment facility is being drafted. Both MSOTA and CSOM have had input as to what should be included in the RFP. Dr. Fred Berlin, a staff person at Johns Hopkins was recommended for Pam to contact regarding his expertise in the treatment of sex offenders.

Northwest prerelease center: Kerry Pribnow gave an update to the group regarding the proposed center sited in the Kalispell area. There are two proposals; a 40 bed all male facility or a 30 male, 10 female facility. The RFP's will be sent in July with a target opening early in 2009. Meetings are being held regarding building a 20 bed Native American female facility in Pablo.

Offender population report: Gary Hamel gave the group an overview of the revised and simplified one page report. Offender population numbers are declining based on utilization of community based programs and new programs instituted by the department. It was suggested and Gary agreed to include in the report separate categories for probation and parole respectively.

Probation or parole Administrative Rules: Diana Koch reported on the proposed changes with the significant changes being prohibiting offenders from using alcohol, no gambling, and banning the use of medical marijuana. The initial public hearing was held January 3, 2008 and a second public hearing will be held March 5, 2008. The comment period will be extended until March 14, 2008. It was recommended that payment of child support be added as a standard condition of probation or parole to the administrative rules.

BOPP Administrative Rules: Colleen White met with the Board in November and has a nearly complete draft of the rules to be forwarded for informal review by relevant Department Staff. She will also send a draft of the proposed changes to Board members and staff for additional review as well. A meeting with the MSP Records department and board staff will be scheduled to discuss the sentencing handbook.

BOPP staffing & Great Falls satellite office: Craig Thomas reported that a staff person from MSP is helping with the backlog of filing. The group learned that BOPPP can contract with the Secretary of State's office to hire a staff person to scan all their records into the file-net system. The board will be requesting a permanent administrative support position in the 2009 legislative session. A job announcement will be forthcoming advertising the parole analyst position in the Great Falls satellite office.

e-Rim system: Mike Raczkowski is the lead person in the creation of a strategic plan for electronic records management. The legislature allocated funds for the new system and a plan is being formulated through an executive planning committee. Mike told the members that the new system will greatly simplify the department's record management with the goal of having one electronic file for a specific document. DOC records will be input with the target to add BOPP records into the system at a later date. A professional records manager position will be requested and the time frame is to have a plan in place by December, 2008 to bring before the legislature.

Public comment: There was no public comment.

Closing remarks:

Jeff Walter wanted the record to reflect his appreciation to Cathy Gordon and her staff for agreeing to copy the interstate packets.

Policy 1.1.4 has been revised to reflect the change from quarterly joint meetings to semi-annual.

Next joint meeting will be scheduled for June or July, 2008.

Meeting adjourned.